

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 2, 3, 5, 8, 10-13 and 15 and cancel claims 1 and 16-32 without prejudice in accordance with the following claim listing.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently amended) The tissue connector assembly of claim ~~[[1]]~~3 wherein, when said at least one restraining device is uncoupled, said fastener moves from said open configuration towards said closed configuration.

3. (Currently amended) A tissue connector assembly comprising: a fastener, where said fastener is self-closing and is movable between an open configuration and a closed configuration having a shape of two or more stitches; and at least one restraining device, where said at least one restraining device is coupled to said fastener for restraining said fastener towards said open configuration~~The tissue connector assembly of claim 1, further comprising a suture and at least one needle releasably attached to said fastener~~ through said suture.

4. (Original) The tissue connector assembly of claim 3, wherein at least a portion of said restraining device remains on said fastener when said needle is released from said fastener.

5. (Currently amended) The tissue connector assembly of claim ~~[[1]]~~3, wherein said fastener comprises a wire.

6. (Original) The tissue connector assembly of claim 5, wherein said wire has a generally circular cross-section.

7. (Original) The tissue connector assembly of claim 5 wherein said wire comprises shape memory material.

8. (Currently amended) The tissue connector assembly of claim ~~[[1]]~~3, wherein said at least one restraining device is a restraining device, wherein said fastener has a first end portion, a second end portion and an elongated member therebetween, said first end portion being coupled to said

mechanical restraining device, said second end portion having a cross-sectional area greater than a cross-sectional area of said elongated member.

9. (Original) The tissue connector assembly of claim 8, further comprising a needle releasably attached to said fastener, wherein at least a portion of said restraining device remains on said fastener when said needle is released from said fastener.

10. (Currently amended) The tissue connector assembly of claim [[1]]3, wherein said at least one restraining device includes a first restraining device and a second restraining device, wherein said fastener has a first end portion, a second end portion and an elongated member therebetween, said first end portion being coupled to said first restraining device, and said second end portion being coupled to said second restraining device.

11. (Currently amended) A tissue connector assembly comprising: a fastener, where said fastener is self-closing and is movable between an open configuration and a closed configuration having a shape of two or more stitches; and at least one restraining device, where said at least one restraining device is coupled to said fastener for restraining said fastener towards said open configuration, wherein said at least one restraining device includes a first restraining device and a second restraining device, wherein said fastener has a first end portion, a second end portion and an elongated member therebetween, said first end portion being coupled to said first restraining device, and said second end portion being coupled to said second restraining device. ~~The tissue connector assembly of claim 10,~~ further comprising a first needle releasably attached to said first end portion and a second needle releasably attached to said second end portion, wherein at least a portion of each of said at least one restraining device remains on said fastener when each of said needles is released from said fastener.

12. (Currently amended) The tissue connector assembly of claim [[1]]3 wherein said fastener is in a relaxed state when in said closed configuration.

13. (Currently amended) The tissue connector assembly of claim [[1]]3 wherein said restraining device comprises a coil surrounding at least a portion of said fastener.

14. (Original) The tissue connector assembly of claim 13 wherein said coil comprises a plurality of adjacent loops, said coil being compressible with said plurality of adjacent loops being spaced closer to one another along one side of said coil than along an opposite side of said coil.

15. (Currently amended) A tissue connector assembly comprising: a fastener, where said fastener is self-closing and is movable between an open configuration and a closed configuration having a shape of two or more stitches; and at least one restraining device, where said at least one restraining device is coupled to said fastener for restraining said fastener towards said open configuration wherein said restraining device comprises a coil surrounding at least a portion of said fastener ~~The tissue connector assembly of claim 13~~ wherein each of said at least one restraining device includes a lock releasably engaging said coil, wherein engagement of said lock with said coil biases said fastener in said open configuration.

Claims 16-32 (Cancelled)